UNITED NATIONS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/ARM/2
9 September 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Second periodic reports of States parties

ARMENIA*

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

For the initial report submitted by the Government of Armenia, see CEDAW/C/ARM/1 and Corr.1; for its consideration by the Committee, see CEDAW/C/SR.344, 345 and 349, and Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/52/38/Rev.1), part two, paras. 35-68.

00-23317 (E)

/...

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring the full and equal participation of women in the political, social, economic and spiritual life of the country is one of the most important prerequisites for building a democratic State that is governed by the rule of law and is socially just.

Armenia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1993, and in 1996 submitted its initial report, which was compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia on the basis of information provided by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Security, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Security, the Ministry of the Economy, the State Committee on Statistics, the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia and other ministries and departments.

The present report constitutes a detailed account covering the period from 1996 to 1999. It contains information about changes affecting the situation of women in Armenia which have occurred over the given period and sets out the major legislative and structural measures aimed at improving the situation of women and achieving genuine gender equity which have been adopted since 1996.

The starting point for assessing the current situation as regards gender equality in Armenia is the Constitution of Armenia of 1995 which "has supreme juridical force, and its norms are applicable directly" (art. 6).

PART 1

Article 1

1. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, which states that "Citizens, regardless of nationality, race, sex, language, religion, political or other persuasion, social origin, property or other wealth, shall have all the rights, freedoms and obligations established by the Constitution and the laws" (art. 15), and under legislative acts adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia, there is no discrimination against women in Armenia.

However, there is no general definition of the expression "discrimination against women" either in the Constitution or in other legislative acts of the Republic of Armenia.

2. International conventions (treaties) ratified by the Republic of Armenia take precedence over national laws; therefore the International Bill of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which contains a general definition of the concept "discrimination against women", and other international treaties also guarantee the equal rights of men and women in Armenia.

International treaties and conventions that contradict the Constitution may be ratified only after the necessary amendments to the Constitution have been introduced (art. 6).

3. The Republic of Armenia acceded to the following international conventions concerning the advancement of women and the protection of women's rights:

- The 1950 Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value;
- The 1958 Discrimination (employment and occupation) Convention;
- The 1957 Convention on the Nationality of Married Women;
- The 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education.

4. The Parliament is currently discussing ratification of the 1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

Article 2

5. The Republic of Armenia adopted a new Constitution in 1995 and created its own legislative basis, which will enter into force during 1999.

6. Legally, women enjoy all guarantees against discrimination: equality is guaranteed under the Constitution and there are no discriminatory laws, regulations, policies or practices against women. Any actions and practices that are discriminatory in nature contradict the Constitution and the laws and entail liability.

7. Under the Constitution, international treaties concluded by the Republic of Armenia and ratified are a constituent part of the legal system of the Republic and take precedence over national laws.

8. The principle of equal rights of men and women is set out in articles 3, 4, 15, 16 and 32 of the Constitution and is indirectly laid down in many other articles guaranteeing the protection of basic human and civil rights and freedoms.

- The State shall guarantee the protection of human rights and freedoms on the basis of the Constitution and the laws, in accordance with the principles and norms of international law (art. 4).

- Everyone shall be equal before the law and shall be given equal protection of the law without discrimination (art. 16).

- Families, mothers and children shall be under the care and protection of society and the State. Women and men shall enjoy equal rights when entering into marriage, during marriage and in the course of divorce (art. 32).

- The Government shall take measures to strengthen legality and protect the rights and freedoms of citizens [...] (art. 89).

9. Everyone shall be obliged to observe the Constitution and the laws, and respect the rights, freedoms and dignity of others (art. 48). State bodies and officials shall be competent to execute only those acts which they are authorized to carry out by legislation (art. 5).

10. The Constitution provides a procedure for monitoring, on the basis of rigorous compliance with legality, the guaranteeing of the basic rights and freedoms recognized for all citizens.

- Everyone shall be entitled to legal defence of the rights and freedoms laid down in the Constitution and the laws (art. 38).

- In order to restore rights that have been violated and to determine the validity of a charge brought against him, every person shall be entitled to a public hearing of his case by an independent and impartial court on the basis of equality and in accordance with the requirements of justice (art.39).

- Everyone shall be entitled to receive legal assistance. Legal assistance shall be provided free of charge in cases prescribed by law (art. 40).

11. The legislation of the Republic of Armenia provides for measures to combat the violation of human rights (which are not divided into men's and women's rights) and physical and moral abuse, etc.

always turn to the law-enforcement bodies for help, and where they do so, they prefer to discuss their case with female personnel.

In order to stop violence against women, work is being carried out on improving legislation, provision is being made to create special social welfare services for victims of violence and the work of a centre providing psychological support to women in crisis situations is being developed. Much importance is attached to the development of integrated programmes for the social rehabilitation of women who have been subjected to violence.

As one of the measures to combat violence against women, improvements to the procedures for keeping statistical records on criminal and legal offences are under consideration.

14. Men and women have the same rights as regards working conditions, both in public-sector and private-sector enterprises. They are entitled to receive equal pay for work of equal value.

15. Men and women may, without discrimination or preference, use all the opportunities available in the country for professional advancement and to improve their situation.

16. The National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia did not view the previous laws and regulations of the Republic as being discriminatory against women and has not therefore enacted any substantial amendments to them.

Article 3

17. On the path of democratization the Republic of Armenia has encountered many economic and social difficulties. Such factors as the blockade, a drastic decline in living standards during the period of transition, an increase in unemployment, large-scale impoverishment, etc., have complicated the situation of women more than that of men. The Government has therefore taken measures, devoting special attention to single mothers, large families and the elderly, who are provided with social assistance.

18. An Office for Women's and Children's Issues has been established under the Ministry of Social Security. The National Assembly has a permanent Committee on Public Health and Social Issues, and a Social Policy Department has been established in the Government.

19. Government regulation No. 360 of 6 August 1997 established a gender commission made up of both members of the Government and representatives of public organizations. A gender policy development programme was implemented jointly with UNDP in Armenia, but this has been frozen since December 1998. These are essentially two separate commissions which periodically conduct joint meetings. The work of both commissions is coordinated by the Republic's Ministry of Social Security.

20. In the context of human rights' protection, women's issues are dealt with by the Commission on Human Rights which was established in April 1998 and is attached to the office of the President of the Republic of Armenia.

21. Women have the same opportunities as men in the cultural life of the country. In a country where culture plays a central role in society, women hold leading positions in this field.

Women employed under the Ministry of Culture, Youth Affairs and Sport

Institution	1996	1997
Museums, libraries and other cultural institutions	16,670	1,927
Ministerial offices	50	50
Cinemas, concert halls, theatres and district cinema networks	1,712	1,485
Scientific institutions	43	43
Special 10-year music schools, specialized secondary school for cinematography, centre for disabled children, advanced training courses, public education	332	281
Administrative building management	12	12
Sport administration	1,576	1,576
Film studios	217	201
Maintenance Office	3	3

Source: Ministry of Culture, Youth Affairs and Sport of the Republic of Armenia.

Article 4

22. Currently, there are a number of documents in force which were specially adopted by the Government to accelerate the attainment of de facto equality between men and women.

23. The Government of the Republic of Armenia ratified through decisions the following documents which define mechanisms for ensuring opportunities for women:

- "the Conceptual plan for Improving the Status of Women in the Republic of Armenia" (Decision No. 242 of 15 April 1998).
- "the National Programme of Action to Improve the Status of Women and Enhance Their Role in Society in the Republic of Armenia for the Period 1998-2000" (Decision No. 406 of 26 June 1998).

24. In view of the situation where many positions have been lost by women, the Conceptual Plan focused on the following areas:

- legal status of women,
- right to employment,
- right to health protection,
- right to education.

25. The National Programme of Action provides for:

- an annual report to the Government on measures to improve the status of women in Armenia, adopted in compliance with resolutions of the Fourth World Conference on Women,
- a gender-based appraisal of the legislation of the Republic of Armenia (1998-2000),
- the elaboration of proposals to widen the representation of women in state administrative bodies,
- the improvement of legislation providing protection for women who are the victims of criminal acts, including those who have been subjected to violence (1998-2000),
- enhancing the work of social, psychological and counselling services in providing assistance to women who are the victims of criminal acts, including those who have been subjected to violence and find themselves in urgent circumstances,
- the development and implementation of programmes to train and retrain social service employees - aimed at providing assistance to women who have been subjected to violent acts,
- the development and implementation of a programme to provide employment for women as part of a special-purpose programme to promote employment in general,
- the preparation of analytical and reference materials on the situation of women in the labour market (done annually),
- monitoring the fulfilment of the requirements of normative acts on employment protection and the drafting of annual reports on employment protection for working women and on the monitoring of conditions of employment,
- the elaboration of appropriate proposals and measures on employment protection for working women and their inclusion in agreements signed between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia,

- the elaboration of integrated study programmes and the training of appropriate specialists for the purposes of developing a gender policy and ensuring equal rights for men and women,

- the development and implementation of programmes to improve the situation of women working in the cultural field,

- the participation of women's public organizations in the process of drawing up programmes for the socio-economic development of rural areas,

- the elaboration and implementation of a national reproductive health programme,

- increasing the size of the state order for providing medical assistance and medical services for women and children, and ensuring through state guarantees the financing of special-purpose programmes developed within this framework,

- the publishing and dissemination through the mass media of laws and conventions on the protection of women's rights and the advancement of women; the production of radio and television programmes to provide information and advice on legal and other aspects of women's rights; the establishment of information and legal counselling services; and the organization of training sessions on the rights of working women for senior management in government institutions, enterprises and other organizations.

In order to monitor and coordinate work on implementing the national programme of action for the advancement of women, a special commission has been established comprising representatives of the relevant ministries and departments.

26. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of International Organizations), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the organization Save the Children have jointly prepared a report entitled "Analysis of the Situation of Women and Children in Armenia". An analytical reference book, "Women and Men of Armenia", is virtually ready for publication. Work is being carried out on creating a compilation of information and statistics entitled "The Family, Women and Children".

27. Additional amendments to legislation have been introduced. In 1992, the Parliament adopted a decision on making amendments to the Marriage and Family Code of the Republic of Armenia, under which the amount of alimony was increased; alimony is also deducted from any unemployment benefit received by a person paying alimony, and the marriage age for women was lowered from 18 to 17.

28. Women in the Republic of Armenia have the freedom to choose any profession. The Government adopted resolution No. 520 dated 9 November 1994 on a list of certain measures aimed at supporting and protecting women, mothers, children and the family, which sets out the permissible standards for women regarding the lifting and carrying of heavy objects, and establishes a list of occupations and

jobs which must be carried out mainly by women, minors and persons with restricted mobility, and a list of those sectors of the economy which involve strenuous, toxic and harmful working conditions where work by pregnant women, women of reproductive age and minors is prohibited.

Articles 184-187 of the Labour Code and Government regulation No. 520 prohibit work by pregnant women and nursing mothers in such jobs.

Article 5

29. Despite the existence of legal standards guaranteeing the equal rights of men and women in employment, social relations and the family, the results of studies that have been carried out indicate that Armenian women need more consistent support with regard to the establishment of equal opportunities in various aspects of life.

30. Stereotypes about the role of men and women, especially in family relations, are still quite perceptible in the views and behaviour of Armenia's citizens, particularly in rural areas and among the middle-aged and elderly.

31. In Armenia, men have traditionally been the breadwinners and heads of family. Today, under the conditions of the transitional period, the situation has changed and the role of the woman in supporting the family and in decision-making has increased. The number of families in which both spouses work is rising constantly. During the events in Nagorny Karabakh in 1988, and in the very harsh economic and social conditions which prevailed in the newly independent country, Armenian women played an active role alongside men.

32. Moreover, in accordance with established traditions, women also bear the responsibility for bringing up children and for housekeeping. This stems not from the idea of male superiority but from historical customs and traditions according to which women are assigned the respected role of the mother with all the obligations that this entails, and, as a result, women are overburdened with work. Taking into account also the exceptionally difficult living conditions which have prevailed over recent years, women have had to shoulder an enormous physical and emotional burden.

33. In order to protect women's rights, ensure gender equality and establish the corresponding degree of social awareness, the national programme of action includes provision for special educational radio and television programmes to be made and promotional work to be carried out in this area. Within the framework of the memorandum of understanding signed between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), a film entitled "Women's Rights" was made and has been shown on several channels on Armenian television.

34. Although the family, mothers and children are protected by the State, their position has become most difficult in recent years. The size and term of payments for child care have been reduced. Facing a sustained rise in the costs of electricity, communal services and rents, and low wages, and against a background of high levels of unemployment, the family has been unprotected. The

worsening situation in the social sphere has placed a heavy burden on women. The State has been unable to protect the family, to safeguard and promote motherhood and to achieve equal rights in family relations.

35. In 1998, about 1,700 non-governmental organizations were registered in Armenia, 12 per cent of which dealt with women's and children's issues. There are more than 40 women's organizations in the Republic promoting women's political, social and cultural rights. Some of these organizations have been set up along occupational lines and bring together women scientists, women artists, women journalists and women entrepreneurs. Other organizations are engaged in social and political activities: environmental protection, protection of mothers and children, and promoting equal rights for men and women, etc. International Armenian women's organizations have been set up that also include representatives of the Armenian diaspora.

36. A school for women leaders, established by the non-governmental Armenian Women's Council, has been in operation since 1994. Its aim is to promote the involvement of women in the life of society. The school trains girls for future careers and positions of leadership.

37. Women and women's organizations have taken and continue to take an active part in the political life of the country, in particular in the elections to the National Assembly held in 1996 and 1999, and in the special presidential elections of 1998.

Article 6

38. Article 287 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia prohibits procurement for prostitution. The penalty for running brothels is a fine ranging from 300 to 500 times the minimum wage, or restraint of freedom for a period of up to 2 years, or imprisonment for a period of up to 5 years.

39. There has been an increase in prostitution in recent years, which is attributable to the worsening economic situation in the country. However, given the traditionally negative attitude towards prostitution and open condemnation of it by society and within the family, the trend of recent years is unlikely to continue. No cases of the rape of prostitutes have been reported.

PART II

Article 7

40. Women are entitled on equal terms with men to vote and to be elected to any public posts. This right is guaranteed by articles 27 and 64 of the Constitution. Article 3 of the Constitution states: "The elections for the post of the President, and of deputies to the National Assembly, and to the local self-governing bodies of the Republic of Armenia, as well as referendums, shall be held based on the right to universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot."

41. There are currently four women members (out of 131 deputies) of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, which is equivalent to 5.24 per cent of the total number of deputies. Although there are significantly fewer women today in the National Assembly than there were in the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR, they are more effectively involved in the legislative process.

42. The proportion of women in executive and judicial bodies is significantly higher. Measures are planned to encourage the broader involvement of women in the activities of the civil service. The President's public relations adviser is a woman. There are also women on the Commission on Human Rights attached to the office of the President of the Republic of Armenia.

43. In 1996-1997 only one woman held a ministerial post. There are currently no women ministers in the Government. Two women currently hold deputy ministerial posts (in the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Justice). At the same time, women are widely represented in the middle echelons of State power. About 70 per cent of officials employed in such important fields as health, culture and education are women.

44. Until recently the proportion of women among employees in the specialist and general service categories of the Ministry of Internal Affairs did not exceed 5 per cent. However, some progress has been achieved recently. The number of women working in the law-enforcement system has risen recently. At the present time, 2,198 women are employed under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Security of the Republic of Armenia, of whom 307 are officers, 509 are rank-and-file employees and 1,382 are civilian employees. Each year the number of women students in the college of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Security increases. The number of women students as at 1 September 1998 stood at 94, and the number of women entering police college is rising constantly. There is an all-women group of road traffic officers operating in Yerevan.

45. The percentage ratio of men and women employees in ministries stands on average at 40-60 per cent. Gender restrictions regarding the above-mentioned posts have not been observed and no quotas have ever been set for women employees or appointees.

Article 8

46. The number of women employees in the central offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the 30 embassies and missions of the Republic of Armenia abroad is shown in the table below:

The number of women who are members or heads of official delegations to international meetings and conferences is rising constantly. There are currently no data available on the number of citizens of the Republic of Armenia working within the United Nations system and other international, global and regional organizations.

Central offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

	Total number	Number of women
Minister, deputy ministers, general secretary, ambassadors, chief of staff, department heads, section heads, counsellors, first secretaries, ministerial assistants	82	11
Second secretaries, third secretaries, attachés	87	47
Embassies and missions		
Ambassadors, counsellors, first secretaries	64	9
Second secretaries, third secretaries, attachés	32	6

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

Article 9

47. Issues concerning citizenship are addressed in the following provisions of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Citizenship:

- Article 3, paragraph 2: "Citizens of the Republic of Armenia shall be equal before the law irrespective of the procedure by which the citizenship has been gained, irrespective of nationality, race, sex, language, faith, political or other views, or social origin, and shall have the same rights, freedoms and responsibilities envisaged by laws and the Constitution";

- Article 6: "The marriage of a woman who is a citizen of the Republic of Armenia to an alien shall not automatically change her citizenship, and vice versa."

48. According to article 11, "A child shall obtain citizenship of Armenia irrespective of the place of its birth if its parents are citizens of Armenia. If one of the parents of the child is an alien and the other is a citizen of the Republic of Armenia, the citizenship shall be determined by the parents' written agreement. In the absence of such agreement, the child shall obtain Armenian citizenship if it is born in Armenia; or, where Armenian citizenship is not obtained, the child shall remain without citizenship. If its parents permanently reside in the Republic of Armenia, the child shall obtain Armenian citizenship. If one of the parents of the child is a citizen of Armenia and the citizenship of the other is unknown or if the other parent has no citizenship, the child shall become a citizen of Armenia." Thus, in granting citizenship, the law does not set priorities in terms of the citizenship of either parent. Mothers and fathers can confer their nationality on their children on an equal footing. Minors can travel on the passports of both parents.

49. A woman does not require the permission of her spouse or anyone else in order to obtain a passport or to travel outside the country.

PART III

Article 10

50. According to 1998 data, in the Republic of Armenia the literacy rate in the 9-49 age group is 99.9 per cent. The percentage of girls attending secondary schools, as compared with the number of boys and of the total population, is shown in the tables below.

51. Assistance to children from low-income and poor families is provided at the request of the parents, on the basis of special decisions by school executive committees and boards of guardians. The shortage of textbooks has been a serious problem in recent years, and their high prices are a problem currently. The Government of the Republic of Armenia, through the Ministry of Education and Science, has established a textbook leasing system for general-education schools. The purpose of this system is to implement a long-term programme to provide textbooks for pupils of State general-education schools and to establish guarantees that, within a period of four years, these schools will independently acquire textbooks through the proceeds from the leasing. The leasing system has the aim of providing all pupils in Armenia with basic textbooks by setting a lease rate that is accessible to all.

52. The leasing system has been in operation in all of Armenia's general-education schools since September 1997 and will continue to operate for at least four years. During this period, textbooks for all compulsory subjects in the State curriculum from class 1 to class 10 will be incorporated within the leasing system (in the 1997/98 academic year 10 textbook titles were distributed, and in the 1998/99 academic year as many as 24 titles have been distributed under the system). Payments for leasing the textbooks constitute approximately a quarter of their cost price.

53. Public transport costs have currently stabilized but still remain high. Students are granted a discount on the cost of monthly travel cards. In 1997 the State budget allocations for education and science stood at 8.9 per cent.

54. In 1998 there were 15 public and 85 private universities, institutes and colleges in Armenia. The majority of the private educational institutions are licensed by the State, but in practice diplomas issued by private educational institutions are not in all cases equivalent to those of public educational institutions. Graduates of such institutions usually have certain difficulties obtaining work. More than 23,000 people, of whom more than half are girls, study at institutions of higher education. Girls predominate among students of both public and private institutions of higher education.

Number of women in public institutions of higher education

	1995/1996	1996/1997
Women	20,270	19,028
Men	19,107	16,689

Source: State Committee on Statistics.

55. There are no quotas for girls with regard to admission to educational institutions or the awarding of grants.

Women as a percentage of the total number of students

	1995	1996	1997
Secondary school pupils	83%	82.8%	80.4%
Students of permanent departments of institutions of higher education	no data	56.1%	50.4%
Students of faculties of natural and applied sciences	49%	46.3%	no data

Source: State Committee for Statistics.

Ratio of women to men (x 100)

	1995	1996	1997
Secondary school pupils	no data	103.7%	100.03%
Students of permanent departments of higher education institutions	105.6%	127.8%	101.6%
Students of faculties of natural and applied sciences	75%	73%	70.2%

Source: State Committee on Statistics.

56. Among the subjects which girls traditionally show a preference to study are medicine, where girls make up 90 per cent of the students, and education and the arts where they constitute 78.9 per cent of the students. However, a significant number of girls also study in faculties training specialists in the fields of economics (41.9 per cent in 1994) and industry, transport and communications (about 40 per cent). During recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of girls studying radio-electronics, computer sciences and chemistry, as well as such subjects as management, banking, marketing, international relations and international law. Girls constitute

about 90 per cent of the students of foreign European languages and approximately half of the students of Oriental languages.

Teaching staff of institutions of secondary education by gender

	1997	
	Men	Women
Primary school (classes 1-3)	5.3%	94.7%
Secondary school (classes 4-10)	25.6%	74.4%

Source: State Committee on Statistics.

Number of women engaged in scientific work

	1996			1997		
	Number of organizations	Total number of employees	Women	Number of organizations	Total number of employees	Women
Scientific institutions	101	6,662	2,871 (43%)	94	5,492	2,509 (45.7%)
National Academy	41	2,751	1,081 (39.3%)	39	2,507	995 (39.7%)

Source: State Committee on Statistics.

57. Opportunities to study abroad have become available owing to the democratization of the country. Today, 50 per cent of the young people studying abroad are girls.

Article 11

58. Every citizen has the right to free choice of employment. Everyone has the right to a just wage no lower than the minimum set by the State and to working conditions that meet health and safety requirements (art. 29 of the Labour Code); moreover, men and women enjoy the same rights in this field (art. 14). Women receive the same wages as men for the same work and have equal opportunities for advancement at work (art. 83). Employers are forbidden to refuse to hire, or to fire women on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity (art. 197).

59. Armenia has always been distinguished by high indicators of economic activity among women. This could be traced to a number of factors, including the State policy aimed at securing equal rights and equal opportunities for men

and women. Numerous laws and privileges protecting women continue to ensure that women are represented in all occupational groups and sectors of the economy. These indicators have fallen in recent years as a result of the difficult economic situation in the country. The old regulatory mechanisms are not functioning: there is no State labour inspectorate, and there is a virtual absence of technical safety inspections by the trades' unions, which makes it more difficult to monitor the level of wages and the length of working hours.

Ratio of women to men (x 100)

	1995	1996	1995-96	1997
Workforce	76.1%	79%		80.4%
Unemployed	205.8%	244.8%	260%	251.9%
Overall wages		67%		

Source: State Committee on Statistics.

60. The continuing privatization process has strengthened the position of men and given them broader access to the means of production. Out of 1,218 privatized enterprises, only 9 were privatized by women.

61. Indicators of entrepreneurship among women in Armenia are low. Programmes focusing on women have already been drawn up in this sphere: vocational training and retraining courses for women have been set up and programmes organized to provide long-term loans and grants to promote the development of small- and medium-sized businesses.

Women as a percentage of the total number of persons

	1995	1996	1997
Workforce	43.2%	44.1%	44.6%
Women occupying senior posts	39.9%	48.9%	46.1%
Administrators and managers		36%	

Source: State Committee on Statistics.

62. One of the positive aspects of recent years has been the focus international organizations on the development of economic activity

63. Women enjoy the same rights as men to social security, health and in other areas. It is prohibited by law to dismiss a pregnant transfer her to a lower-paid job without her agreement (art. 197 of Code).

64. Government decision No. 172 of 13 June 1997 on "procedures for the granting and payment of State allowances to individual groups of children, single mothers and persons caring for children up to two years of age" defines the total amounts of social payments for theses categories. However, this remains a current problem, forcing women and, at times, adolescent girls to search independently for means of subsistence.

65. A new scale for assessing the level of a family's neediness, based, inter alia, on a calculation of the geographic and climatic conditions of the region, is currently being developed and will be introduced in 2000. This system will completely rule out any forms of discrimination against women and will help to identify the most vulnerable groups of women and children.

66. A social support programme for student families is being developed.

67. Women are granted 70 days of paid leave before childbirth. They are also entitled to up to two years' unpaid leave following childbirth, as well as to a number of other privileges (arts. 189 to 193 of the Labour Code and Supreme Council resolution 267). The State provides very varied types of support for pregnant women and nursing mothers: women with children have the opportunity to work according to a schedule that is convenient to them and allows them to take regular rest breaks at work. All privileges and social guarantees are listed in articles 193 to 196 and 264 and 265 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia.

68. The decline in the economy has halted since 1995 and some growth, accompanied by a rise in income levels, has been observed. However, the living standard is still far from satisfactory. An obvious stratification of society into population categories with clearly demarcated high and low income levels is taking place.

69. In 1997, 26 per cent of all live births were to unmarried women, whereas in 1990 this figure stood at 9 per cent. However, the reason for this is more likely to be the increase in the number of marriages which are not officially registered - for the purpose of obtaining State benefits for single mothers. Although the total amount received is small, for a certain number of families it is the only stable source of income. It should be noted that those single mothers who have genuinely never married face not only financial and other practical difficulties relating to childcare but also traditional prejudice on the part of society. The latter is changing gradually.

70. In the period 1990 to 1997 104,056 children attended children's institutions, while their actual capacity was for 145,618 children. The number of teachers working in children's institutions fell by 3,192 and the number of kindergartens by 210. The reasons for these cuts were frequently the high fees beyond the reach of broad sections of the population, poor-quality food, inadequate care and the growing number of unemployed family members able to care for the children. Private kindergartens are a new phenomenon in Armenian life. The majority of them are not registered and, on the whole, only children from well-off families are in a position to attend these institutions.

71. In 1993, refugees, migrants and internally displaced Armenians constituted 14 per cent of the entire population of Armenia (418,000 persons). Of these, 55 per cent were women. About 1 million persons, or 30 per cent of the population of the country, did not have shelter; and of these 514,000 lived in an earthquake area. Today, there are 311,328 refugees registered in Armenia, of whom about 65,000 - mainly men - are temporarily living outside the country. According to studies carried out in 1997, 286,000 refugees currently live in Armenia, the majority of whom are women.

72. The most vulnerable groups of refugees receive assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of the Red Cross, the European Community Humanitarian Office and the United States Government.

73. In order to solve the social and economic problems of refugees, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has identified basic policy areas for promoting the social and economic integration of refugees: housing construction, job creation and completion of the establishment of an integral legislative base in the social and legal spheres. Refugees are being provided with certain privileges.

74. Women refugees appear to be less mobile. Having let the men go to work outside the country, they are left to face a large number of problems alone. The social changes which have taken place because of the migration of men outside the Republic have had a negative effect on the situation of women. This problem is now being examined. Ninety per cent of the refugees, being urban inhabitants from towns in Azerbaijan with "urban occupations", have settled in rural areas and have had to take up work in agricultural jobs.

75. The process of establishing market relations in Armenia is having a negative effect on the labour market, and unemployment is rising. As at 1 January 1998, the number of economically active citizens stood at 2,184,300 persons, of whom 1,573,400 or 73.4 per cent of the workforce [...]. As of January 1998, the number of jobless stood at 130,762 persons, or 11.1 per cent of the able-bodied population, which was 1 per cent more than in the previous year, and 91,713 of these were women.

76. Seventy-five per cent of all unemployed persons are persons aged 50 or more who have not had a job for two years or more. Whereas in 1994, 16.6 per cent of the total number of persons registered as unemployed in the employment centres were people with a higher education and 24.9 per cent with a secondary specialized education, in 1997 these figures had fallen to 12.4 per cent and 22.6 per cent respectively.

77. The main body of unemployed people are urban dwellers - 66.3 per cent of the total number of jobless are concentrated in urban settlements. Thus, 31 per cent are found in Yerevan, 21.2 per cent in Gyumri, 7.3 per cent in Vanadzor and 2.9 per cent in Kapan.

78. The process of job cuts is having a greater effect on women than on men. This can be seen from the example of women engaged in scientific research work.

Over the last 10 years, the average annual number of women employed in this sector has seen a 2.9-fold decline and stood at 10,000 persons. In 1996 this figure was equivalent to 43.1 per cent of the total number employed and 25 per cent had a science degree. Of 459 doctors of science, 13.3 per cent were women, and 32 per cent of science candidates were women.

79. The causes of unemployment are structural changes, job reductions, closures of enterprises and voluntary redundancies. Unemployment among women also has its own specific causes. Women frequently leave jobs voluntarily and opt for unregistered incidental work, since the level of the minimum wage does not meet the minimum subsistence level. Unequal opportunities for professional growth and advancement at work, being subjective in nature, are a further indirect cause of the rise in unemployment among women.

80. All jobless persons receive state support and are referred to jobs where such possibilities exist. In 1993 the Government of Armenia adopted a decision on "payment of a monthly allowance to people with unemployed status and to mothers with children under two years of age". The international community and the Armenian diaspora have assisted unemployed women and poor families.

Article 12

81. Evaluations of women's health in Armenia usually focus on reproductive issues. Nevertheless, a significant number of Armenian women are suffering from chronic and mental illnesses.

82. During the last decade, the average life expectancy of women has risen and the mortality rate in all age groups has fallen.

Ratio of women to men (x 100)

	1996	1997	1998
Forecast life expectancy	110%	110%	no data
Proportion in population	104.6%	104.5%	106.2%

Source: Ministry of Health.

Some data reflecting the situation of women

	1996	1997
Average life expectancy of women (years)	76.2	77.3
Average age at first marriage	22.1 years	22.7 years

Source: Ministry of Health.

	Years	Men	Women
Life expectancy after 60 years	1995/96	16.8 years	20.4 years
	1996/97	17.5 years	21.4 years
Suicide (per 100,000 persons)	1996	3.4 persons	1.2 persons
	1997	3.4 persons	0.8 persons

Source: Ministry of Health.

83. Midwifery/gynaecological services are implemented by 3 national centres, 19 maternity hospitals, 41 maternity/gynaecology wards in city and central district hospitals, 36 independent antenatal clinics, 213 rural out-patients clinics and 623 secondary midwifery clinics.

84. During the last 7 years, 176 women have died in the Republic of Armenia as a result of complications during pregnancy and birth, and 7 of these died outside hospital. On the whole, pregnant women give birth in a hospital environment. In the period from 1995 to 1997 the number of home births declined to a certain extent, from 7.3 per cent in 1995 to 3.9 per cent in 1997. However, this figure is two or three times higher than the 1989-1990 level, which stood at 1.1 per cent-1.4 per cent. This development has been brought about by a decline in the availability of services, a lack of adequate means of transport and communication and an increase in particular groups in the population (refugees, jobless, homeless).

85. Over the last 10 years maternal mortality has fallen to a certain extent but this reduction has taken place very slowly and it is still twice the WHO permissible level for Eastern Europe of 15 deaths per 100,000 live births and higher than the permissible level for individual countries of 25 deaths per 100,000.

Trend of maternal mortality in Armenia, 1990-1997
(per 100,000 live births)

Year	Number of live births	Maternal mortality index
1990	79,882	40.1
1991	77,825	23.1
1992	70,581	14.2
1993	59,041	27.1
1994	51,143	29.3
1995	48,960	34.7
1996	48,134	20.8
1997	43,929	38.8

Source: State Committee on Statistics.

86. As the results of studies of the aetiological pattern of maternal mortality show, the main causes in Armenia are perinatal haemorrhages, hypertensive irregularities, abortions and puerperal sepsis-related complications. Causes unconnected with the pregnancy, i.e. death as a result of extragenital diseases, account for 16.5 per cent of cases. In 60 per cent to 70 per cent of cases, it has been possible to prevent maternal mortality by taking appropriate measures.

87. In the period from 1995 to 1997, significant changes occurred in the pattern of maternal mortality. Cases of maternal mortality unconnected with the pregnancy have come to the forefront over the last two years and in 1996/1997 accounted for almost one third of deaths, double that in the period from 1993 to 1995. Such a high incidence of extragenital diseases is a measure of the failings of the entire health care system of Armenia and the unsatisfactory level of professional medical care as a whole. The majority of maternal mortality cases could be prevented if special assistance were provided to pregnant women in high-risk groups, perinatal and extragenital diseases were diagnosed early, and the family planning system were improved with the appropriate use of modern contraceptives.

88. Over the last 7 years, a virtual halving of the birth rate has been recorded (the number of births stood at: 79,882 in 1990, 59,041 in 1993 and 43,929 in 1997), against the background of a relative increase in the overall mortality rate (the mortality rate per 1,000 inhabitants, per thousand (‰), was: 6.2‰ in 1990, 7.4‰ in 1993 and 6.3‰ in 1997), which has resulted in a threefold decline in the rate of natural increase (1990 - 16.3‰, 1993 - 8.4‰, 1996 - 5.3‰).

Birth rate, mortality rate, rate of natural increase, 1990-1997
(per 1,000 persons)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total number of births	79,882	77,825	70,581	59,041	51,143	48,960	48,134	43,929
Birth rate	22.5	21.6	19.2	15.8	13.7	13.0	12.8	11.6
Mortality rate	6.2‰	6.5‰	7.0‰	7.4‰	6.6‰	6.6‰	6.6‰	6.3‰
Rate of natural increase	16.3	15.1	12.2	8.4	7.1	6.4	6.2	5.3

Source: State Committee on Statistics.

89. Significant changes are being observed in people's reproductive behaviour: there has been a marked decline in the average number of children in a family (the trend is to have no more than 1 or 2 children) and a fall in the overall fertility rate (per 1,000 women of relevant age: 1990 - 2.62, 1993 - 1.96, 1996 - 1.6 and 1997 - 1.45).

90. In terms of its infant mortality rate, Armenia is among those countries with a moderate level of infant mortality. Over recent years the level of infant mortality has not actually risen in the Republic, but its rate of decline has slowed significantly (per 1,000 live births: 26.2‰ in 1980, 18.5‰ in 1990 and 15.4‰ in 1997).

91. The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases has increased over recent years by 2-3 times (the incidence of syphilis infection stood at 6.9 cases per 100,000 in 1991, and 16.9 cases per 100,000 in 1997, and the incidence of gonorrhoea infection stood at 21.6 and 28.4 cases, respectively). Over the last four years, 63 cases of HIV infection and 4 cases of AIDS have been recorded.

92. A law legalizing abortions was adopted in 1956, but in 1996 the main provisions governing procedures for carrying out artificial pregnancy terminations were reviewed. Any woman may, if she wishes, terminate an unwanted pregnancy up to the twelfth week of pregnancy. Between the twelfth and twenty-second weeks of a pregnancy, the pregnancy may be terminated if there are medical or social grounds for doing so. Unfortunately, in Armenia abortion is one of the most widespread methods of family planning.

Level of artificial abortions, 1990-1997

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Rate per 1,000 live births	327	350	396	473	597	628	651	575
Rate of abortions per 1,000 women of childbearing age	28.7	29.9	29.6	28.7	31.3	30.5	30.6	24.3

Source: State Committee on Statistics.

93. Anaemia during pregnancy is one of the indicators of socio-economic hardship. Over recent years the incidence of early anaemia among pregnant women has increased more than ninefold.

Anaemia among pregnant women, 1990-1997

Years	Anaemia in early stage of pregnancy	Anaemia in late stage of pregnancy
1990	2.6	13.8
1991	3.4	20.03
1992	4.5	24.64
1993	3.0	44.56
1994	7.4	50.05
1995	10.7	59.56
1996	10.9	46.74
1997	12.6	115.4

Source: Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia.

94. Cancer is one of the most widespread diseases among women in Armenia. Breast cancer is the prime cause of women's death (49.72 per cent). In 1996, 32.6 women per 100,000 suffered from breast cancer, compared with 11.1 per 100,000 with uterine cancer. Although the mortality rate from these diseases has increased, nonetheless no rise has been recorded in the number of cases over the last decade. One cause of the rise in mortality, in particular, is late diagnosis when treatment no longer produces the desired results.

95. The reasons for late diagnosis are the costs of the relevant services, which make them inaccessible for a broad strata of the population, as well as the level of qualifications and lack of essential medical equipment.

In addition, women frequently delay visits to the doctor out of fear of finding out the diagnosis.

The recently opened Mammography Centre, which, although a fee-charging institution, provides free services for women with low incomes, plays an important role.

96. Lung cancer, which is the prime cause of mortality among the population as a whole, ranks only sixth among women. However, as a result of a noticeable rise in the number of women smokers, an upward trend in the incidence of this form of cancer among women is also a possibility.

97. A national study conducted in 1997 showed that 60 per cent of women use methods of contraception, but many utilize unreliable methods of preventing unwanted pregnancies such as the withdrawal method, the rhythm method and vaginal douching. The use of contraceptive pills is not a common method because of the high prices and fear of side-effects.

Comparative use of contraceptive methods
based on 1998 data

Method of contraception	Frequency	Per cent
Withdrawal method	318	53
Intrauterine coil	101	16.8
Condoms	100	16.7
Rhythm method	81	13.5
Vaginal douching	59	9.8
Breastfeeding period	28	4.7
Sterilization	8	1.3
Contraceptive pills	7	1.2
Spermicides	4	0.7

Source: Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia.

98. In order to provide health care for women and raise their life expectancy, a reproductive health programme has been developed, criteria have been introduced for organizing medical and preventive care for women and minors, and the size of the State order for medical care and medical services for women and children has been expanded.

99. No precise data on drug addiction among women is available. This can be explained by the fact that drug addiction has not been a widespread phenomenon in Armenia. In recent years, as a result of the difficulties of the transitional period and the psychological consequences of the country's socio-economic crisis, some rise in drug addiction has been noted.

100. In 1996, the Government budget allocation for m[illegible]al services stood at 13.5 per cent, and in 1997 at 6.7 per cent.

Article 13

101. Current programmes and programmes being developed aim to improve the situation of all vulnerable segments of the population, including pensioners living alone. Wards of children's homes and residents of homes for the elderly are fully supported by the State. Needy families are entitled to receive a family allowance. The right to receive loans, property loans and other forms of financial credit is regulated by the laws of the Republic of Armenia on "banks and banking activities" and "the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia", adopted in June 1996.

102. There are 108,000 disabled persons in Armenia (the majority of whom became disabled as a result of the earthquake in 1988), almost half of whom are of working age. Of these disabled persons, 40,000 or 45 per cent of the total, are women, 8,000 are children and 9,000 are war invalids. Disabled men and women are treated equally.

103. As far as the promotion of equal rights and opportunities in the labour market and in the area of business and finance is concerned, there are plans to develop national and regional employment programmes and programmes for women refugees and for disabled persons.

Article 14

104. In 1991-1992, Armenia carried out a land privatization programme, which led to the creation of 304,000 (302,400 individual and 1,600 collective) private farms. Land was distributed among households, with equal ownership rights for households irrespective of whether they were headed by men or women.

105. Because of the extreme shortage of resources for small-scale mechanization and of agricultural equipment, agricultural operations are carried out predominantly manually, and on the whole by women. The growth of unemployment among women has reached high levels in rural areas as a result of the closure of enterprises and their branches, the majority of which are located away from the main centres. Professional skills acquired over decades are no longer needed.

106. The situation is aggravated by the steady migration of people, which, on the one hand, is leading to the breakdown of traditional forms of family and, on the other hand, is increasing the burden on women forced to take on additional economic worries.

107. Approximately 219,000 Armenian refugees from Azerbaijani towns now live in rural areas where they not only do not have the opportunity to work in their fields of specialization, but also find farming work difficult.

108. Since 1995, peasant mutual-aid alliances, which include peasant farms, have begun to operate in rural areas in Armenia and the Alliance of Irrigation Water Consumers has been functioning since 1997. These associations comprise men only. The number of women taking part in meetings is minimal.

109. Of the employees at the 860 rural schools, 75 per cent are women, and women make up 100 per cent of employees in the 453 pre-school institutions. Moreover, 70 per cent of the women working in the schools have a higher education. The overwhelming majority of head teachers and deputy head teachers in rural schools are women. Women also form quite a large number of those working in the system of social services in rural areas. But even where women make up 67 per cent of all employees, the proportion of women in senior positions is only 13 per cent.

110. There are few women's organizations in rural areas, and on the whole they are branches of corresponding centrally based national organizations. Examples are The Role of Armenian Women in the Economy, an organization in Kotayka, the Women's Council in Yegvarda, the All-Armenian Union of Women in Oshakan and Education, a foundation in the village of Paravakar in the Tavush marz.[2]

---

[2]Administrative and political unit in Armenia.

111. There are 20 women elders in villages in Armenia. In 1996, when the National Assembly adopted its decision on local self-government, these women were elected to their posts, having surmounted the difficulties of the electoral process, often in competition with between 10 and 12 men.

PART IV

Article 15

112. According to the legislation of the Republic of Armenia, women and men enjoy equal rights in both criminal and civil trials:

- article 8 of the Criminal Procedure Code states: "All shall be equal before the law and protected by the law without discrimination."

- article 5 of the Civil Procedure Code establishes that "Civil justice shall be administered before the law and the courts on the basis of the principles of equality of citizens and legal persons."

113. In the Republic of Armenia there is a separate investigative isolation unit and prison colony for women. As at 30 September 1998, 37 women were held in the investigative isolation unit. The number of convicted women in the women's prison colony stood at 186. During a six-month period in 1998, 152 cases of crimes committed by women were recorded in the Republic of Armenia.

Year		Persons subjected to imprisonment	Persons released from places of imprisonment
1995	Total number of persons	5,898	3,591
	Women	70	9
1997	Total number of persons	7,370	2,457
	Women	208	27

114. Convicted women who are ill undergo treatment in the Central Hospital of the Criminal Punishment Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Security, and, in individual cases, also in municipal hospitals, where they are cared for by highly qualified specialists. Separate rooms are allocated for mothers with infant children and these are furnished appropriately. The charitable organization "Ŭys" ("Hope") organizes a baptism ceremony for newborn infants as well as providing regular material assistance. About 40 per cent of women are provided with paid work in the production of sewn goods and in ancillary production. The management of the prison colony allows women to wear their own civilian clothes. Meetings with relatives are held twice a month.

Article 16

115. In the Republic of Armenia, spouses have equal rights in entering into a marriage, during a marriage and at its dissolution. During a divorce, the interests of the children are considered paramount. Right and obligations concerning marriage and family relations are codified in the Marriage and Family Code of the Republic of Armenia.

116. According to article 1 of the Marriage and Family Code, the Code's purpose is to contribute to the building of family relations based on the free and full consent of the spouses, free of any financial motivation, and on love and respect. Marriages may be concluded only by mutual consent (art. 14). According to article 15, the minimum legal age for marriage is 17 years, but in exceptional circumstances it may be lowered by one year for women.

117. The new Civil Code does not provide for punishment for polygamy, since this is not a current problem in Armenia.

118. Women have equal rights with men to initiate divorce proceedings, to remarry and have custody of children, and also to receive support from children.